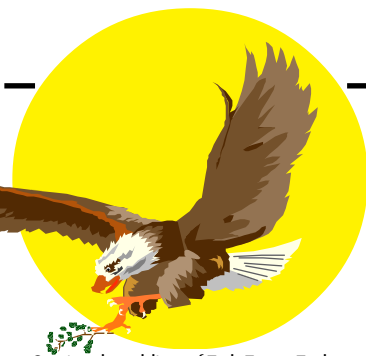


THE Talon

Operation Joint Endeavor, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Serving the soldiers of Task Force Eagle



■ FROM BOSNIA WITH ROCK Band links with fans through AOL

By Spc. CESAR G. SORIANO
29th MPAD

During their visit to Task Force Eagle, modern rock band the Gin Blossoms made an additional stop on their world tour — cyberspace.

After performing for 2,000 servicemembers at Eagle Base, lead singer Robin Wilson logged onto America Online to chat with computer users in the United States, with the help of America Online representative John Colston and some task force soldiers.



Robin Wilson

AOL subscribers seemed surprised to get to chat with Wilson live from Bosnia. It was only 1:30 p.m. on the East Coast, a normally quiet time in cyberspace. But 700 people managed to stop their Independence Day celebrations to visit the live conversation.

Most of the questions obviously dealt with life in the war ravaged country.

"What's it like in Bosnia?" one curious AOL user asked.

"Here on the base, it seems like a big camp-out at Yellowstone National Park," joked Wilson. "But in the helicopter from the air, it was very sad to see so many destroyed homes."

"What was the crowd like in Bosnia?" asked another.

see AOL, page 8

• See additional July 4th photos, page 4



Sgt. Rick Roth

Col. Gregory R. Fontenot, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, guides Defense Secretary William J. Perry on an Independence Day tour of McGovern Base in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Perry spends Fourth with Task Force Eagle soldiers

By Sgt. 1st Class GARY YOUNGER
358th MPAD

The door remains open as to whether there will be a U.S. presence in the Balkans after the end of the IFOR mission, Defense Secretary William J. Perry told Task Force Eagle soldiers during an Independence Day visit.

"Whether there will be a NATO role here in Bosnia — the leaders of NATO will decide that in September," Perry told troops at Lodgment Area Demi. "If there is, it will not involve you troops."

A move to restructure and lighten the force here has been set into motion, with the July 3 announcement that elements from the 4th Battalion, 67th Armor, the 2nd Battalion, 67th Armor, the 2nd Battalion, 68th Armor, the 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry will soon rotate to their

home stations in Germany.

The units will be replaced by military police units from the United States.

Task Force Eagle will then become a lighter, more mobile force, said task force officials.

Perry also visited locations in the 1st Brigade Combat Team's area of operations.

At McGovern Base, he abruptly stopped his tour to speak with a small group of soldiers.

"I thought I had done something wrong and checked to make sure I was squared away," said Spc. Bobby R. Morrison, 22, from Denison, Texas.

Morrison is the driver for Col. Gregory R. Fontenot, 1st Brigade commander.

Perry asked if Morrison had served in Macedonia.

"Roger, sir," he replied.

see PERRY, page 8

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From the top

'Lessons Learned' need to be passed on

Over the next several weeks, the soldiers of Task Force Eagle will see a lot of new faces as added troops arrive to serve in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR.

The soldiers who have been here since the beginning of the operation have done an excellent job making this mission safer and more comfortable for the follow-on troops. Their hard work and dedication have paid off.

As the new troops rotate in, let's all remember that we're one family and one team. I ex-



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Jack L. Tilley**
1st Armored
Division

pect the NCOs who have worked so hard for the past months to continue to uphold the standards we've set, and to make a point of passing on to incoming leaders the lessons that have been learned.

We've had some tough days and weeks here, especially in the beginning, but that doesn't mean we can relax now. In fact, with record-breaking high temperatures and the upcoming national elections in September, I expect Task Force Eagle sergeants to ensure that their soldiers guard against

complacency and focus even more intently on force protection measures.

Conduct mine awareness classes; there are still many uncleared areas.

Make sure your soldiers know the rules of engagement, and enforce the uniform standards and force protection measures.

Following proper convoy procedures is essential. Any time when departing a base camp, flak jackets, load-carrying equipment and Kevlar helmets must be worn.

If the convoy stops for any reason, it is crucial that soldiers get out of the vehicles and provide security. A positive show of

force goes a long way towards dissuading aggression and presenting a strong, professional image.

Finally, take steps to avoid heat casualties; make sure that your soldiers drink plenty of water and take rest breaks as needed.

First sergeants, you need to make check lists of lessons learned during the first phase of this operation, and pass this information on to the incoming soldiers.

The soldiers just arriving are skilled professionals. With a little help from us "old-timers," they'll quickly get up to speed, and we'll all stay safer and healthier.

Viewpoint

Soldier reflects on life-changing Balkan deployment

Editor's Note: The author's unit will soon redeploy after serving here for six months.

Packing for home involves the unavoidable decision of what to take and what to leave.

Uniforms and boots can be stuffed in a duffel bag. Books and mementos can be sent on ahead by mail. Old newspapers and magazines may be discarded if there's no room for them, use for them or sentimental attachment to them. Leftover food most likely will be canned.

The same can be true of memories.

Some things you will want to remember about being deployed to the former Yugosl-



**Spc. George
Roache**
29th MPAD

via. Others you may prefer to forget as soon as you leave.

Soldiers will have spent six months or nine months or a year of their lives here. The experience will include more than just enduring the

mud or dust, knee-deep snow or sweltering heat, life in a tent city or at a mountaintop observation post, the tension of a near confrontation or the mundane routine of daily force protection.

Friendships were forged through a common existence with fellow soldiers, and a lasting concern developed for the long-term well-being of local nationals. One will leave wishing both of them well and won-

dering how they will make out.

What will you leave and what will you take with you when you depart Bosnia? How will you judge what will be worthwhile remembering?

There will be the gut-wrenching scenes of devastated homes and displaced civilians, and the knowledge that local people are struggling to rebuild their lives and return to normalcy.

As a journalist in civilian life, I will share with my readers and community stories on soldiers' professionalism in the face of adversity and good morale despite their being separated from their families.

I will take back reports of Black Hawk helicopter mechanics scraping their knuckles in the freezing cold to send their aircraft off across the Sava River.

One cannot invest the hope

that this noble, humanitarian endeavor will produce lasting peace for war-weary souls without becoming deeply concerned whether that peace will ever be.

After I am gone, I will wonder whether children will ever be able to walk safely across this mine-infested land.

I will not soon forget the young girl who blew us a kiss one day when her father stopped his car along a city street near our convoy.

On the long trek back, I will pore over the memories I will want to keep for a lifetime.

So when the time comes for you to sift through the items you have accumulated during your rotation here, sort through your memories as well.

And in the process, ask yourself, what will you leave and what will you take?

The Talon

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War waged on computer viruses

Task force technicians have prescription for nuisance programs

Computers are sick all over Task Force Eagle. Data loss and hassle are the first symptoms, and it can get worse.

But by taking the appropriate precautions, all this can be avoided.

One step is the use of special software.

The authorized anti-virus software for Task Force Eagle is IBM AntiVirus, said Task Force Eagle headquarters network manager 1st Lt. Lindsey A. Lack from Novato, Calif. IBMAV's most recent software version is 2.4 and its most recent update is 2.4.1e.

The software is available from the servers at division rear area in Slavonski Brod, Croatia and Eagle Base, through FTP from 22nd Signal Brigade or from a unit signal representative.

This software scans the system for virus infections and can prevent some infections from occurring.

"Two types of viruses are causing the most headaches in Task Force Eagle," Lack said.

The first is the Word Concept virus. This virus infects Word document files and Microsoft Word programs.

"Its major symptom is that it will force someone to save his document as a template in Word's template directory," he said.

IBMAV will detect this virus but will not prevent infection or remove it.

If Word has this virus, any Word document opened will be infected, Lack said.

"To clean a system of Word Concept and protect it from further infection, use SCANPROT.DOT," Lack said.

This file can be picked up from the unit signal representative.

Other reported viruses, according to Lack, are boot sector viruses.

These include AntiCMOS, AntiEXE, Monkey, B1 and Cruel. The boot sector is the part of the disk read by a computer when the computer first turns on, Lack said.

Boot sector viruses travel from one computer to another by diskette. Most infections can be prevented with the proper use of IBMAV Virus Shield.

One special note to users of the latest shipment (June 1996) of Compaq laptops: each unit came loaded with AntiCMOS. These laptops shouldn't be used until IBMAV95 is loaded and the virus removed.

"Prevention is the key to elimination of the computer virus problem," Lack said. "Users must frequently scan their hard drives and diskettes for viruses.

"Don't disable the IBMAV virus check at boot time just because it takes a minute or two to complete. Check other people's diskettes before using them. Ensure you maintain backups of all important documents."

If a computer becomes infected, the G-6 Automation or unit signal representative must be contacted.

News briefs

Savings program

All soldiers assigned in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR area of operations are eligible to deposit their unallotted current pay and allowances into a savings account that accrues 10 percent interest annually.

The account is compounded quarterly, and the quarterly interest will be computed on the average quarterly balance on deposit.

Soldiers may deposit up to \$10,000. The interest terminates 60 to 90 days after departure from the area of operations.

Soldiers can enroll either by allotment (checking "other" and specifying "SDP" on a DD Form 2258) or by making a check or cash deposit using DD Form 1131.

Reserve Component personnel can only use the cash collection procedure. More information is available at camp finance offices.

Russian troops vote

Russian Separate Brigade soldiers interrupted their peace enforcement activities briefly July 2 to cast ballots in their nation's presidential run-off election.

About 75 percent of the brigade's vote went to incumbent Russian President Boris Yeltsin, said Maj. Andrei Zatanov, a Russian Airborne Separate Brigade liaison officer.

Yeltsin received 54 percent of the national vote while challenger Gennady Zyuganov garnered about 40 percent.

Russian voters have the option of voting "against both candidates."

Completed ballots were sent to Belgrade, counted, and forwarded to Moscow where they were included among the regular returns.

AFN Request Line

Got a request, dedication or just want your voice heard on the air?

The AFN Radio request line is MSE 555-5556.

Cultural display



Spc. Teresa Hawkins

Bosnian folk dancers perform the Bosausko Kolo July 4 at Eagle Base.

Weekly weather forecast

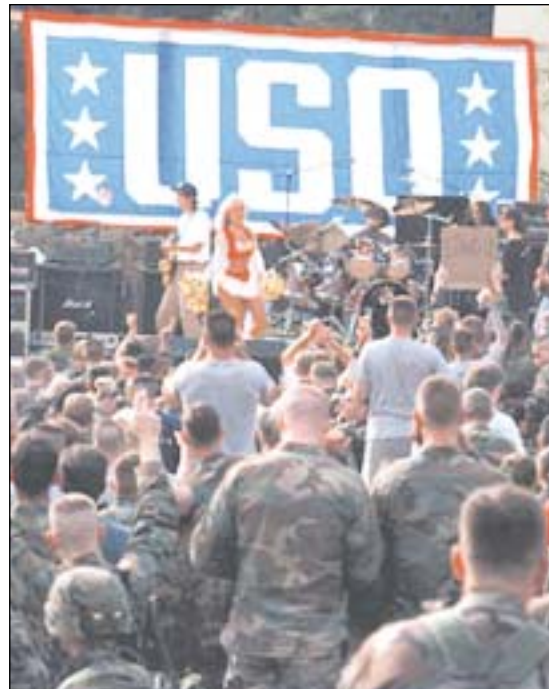
	HIGH/LOW	CHANCE RAIN
Today	75/55	Moderate
Sat	80s/55	Slight
Sun	85+/55	Moderate
Mon	75+/55+	Slight
Tue	75+/55	Low
Wed	80s/55	Slight
Thur	85/55	Moderate

Source: 617th Weather Squadron



Spc. Tony Chism (right) strains during a tug-of-war game at Comanche.

Spc. George Roache



Sgt. Ed Rollins

An international audience of servicemembers watches the festivities at Eagle Base.

Independence Day

Soldiers celebrate the Fourth with barbecues, bands and cheerleaders

Just because they're thousands of miles from home is no reason to stop celebrating America's birthday. Last week, U.S. troops celebrated July 4th, along with those from dozens of other nations participating in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR and several celebrities.

At Eagle Base, the highlight of the day was a performance by modern rock band Gin Blossoms. The band began their day in Amsterdam, played in Bosnia-Herzegovina, then flew to London before the day was over.

The Gin Blossoms were joined onstage by the San Francisco '49er cheerleaders, who visited nine base camps including Alicia, Angela, Colt, Gentry, Guardian, Kime, Lisa, McGovern and Steel Castle.

"It was an honor to be able to bring a little bit of home to the soldiers," said cheerleader Katie Lorenz.

The air over the athletic field was filled with the smoky waft of barbecued chicken and ribs. More than 200 soldiers showed up for an early morning 5K run. Others competed in volleyball, tug-of-war, basketball and even Nintendo matches.

"It was a good reality break," said Staff Sgt. Richard B. Goodboe, 28, from Boise, Idaho. "For me, the best part was seeing the troops enjoy themselves."

There was something for everyone at practically every base camp. Southern rock band JB Walker, Latino band Heart & Soul and a USO/DoD comedy tour entertained hundreds of troops.



Spc. Bryan Driver



Spc. Teresa Hawkins



Spc. Cesar G. Soriano

Clockwise from top: Soldiers toss around Gin Blossoms lead singer Robin Wilson after he leaped into the crowd; Pfc. Annette Gonzalez loads up on barbecued ribs and chicken; a '49ers cheerleader teases the crowd while Gin Blossoms guitarist Jesse Valenzuela jams on.

Top NCO sees bright, challenging future

By Sgt. 1st Class
BETTINA E. TILSON
29th MPAD

In a four-day visit to Task Force Eagle that ended on the Fourth of July, Army Sgt. Maj. Gene C. McKinney acknowledged today's Army will face challenges, but he also predicted a bright future for the slimmer, more versatile force.

"The chief of staff (Gen. Dennis J. Reimer) has some tough decisions to make really soon," McKinney told a group of Army Reserve and Army National Guard NCOs he ate breakfast with at Eagle Base.

"He is trying to hold fast with 495,000 soldiers on the active-duty side of the house," McKinney said. "But with the budget we have ... are we going to be able to keep that force fed, trained and ready to go?"

McKinney visited 3,000 to 4,000 troops during his first visit to Task Force Eagle, including those at Lodgment Area Lisa.

There, soldiers talked to him about their jobs, family concerns and quality of life issues. McKinney toured the camp, including living areas. He caught Sgt. Chelvy J. Battee, Company B, 47th Forward Support Battalion, by surprise.

McKinney asked her about her pre-deployment training. She said the guidance on mine awareness and convoy training was helpful.

He also asked about her family. Battee has a son in the Navy and her daughter just graduated Baumholder High

School.

When he asked her about living conditions, she replied, "This is heaven compared to the Gulf (War). There are a lot more comforts."

Throughout his visit, McKinney talked to soldiers about an array of issues including contingencies, such as Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR which he said are not budgeted for ahead of time.

"I am concerned that some of the contingencies may be perceived as delaying quality of life programs," McKinney said. "Those programs are competing for the same money that the contingency money is competing for."

And the frequency of missions such as Operation DESERT STORM, Haiti, Macedonia and others continue to increase, stretching the capabilities of the Army, which is now down to 10 divisions.

"The Army's op tempo (number of operations) has increased 300 percent since 1989," he said.

As the senior enlisted advisor to Reimer, McKinney said he takes ideas from soldiers and passes them on to higher channels.

"Hopefully, it helps (officials) understand in a broader sense, the effects (certain policies) have on the individual soldier."

Midway through his visit, he was already preparing a report for Reimer.

"No one touches it but him," he said. "I don't have any of this filtering stuff."

During his stay, McKinney said he heard a range of com-



Master Sgt. Rich Glynn

Army Sgt. Maj. Gene C. McKinney speaks with soldiers working with the Russian Separate Brigade.

ments and noted that Task Force Eagle soldiers exhibited both candor and professionalism.

The comments of one young private first class especially struck him. The young man told McKinney that he enjoyed serving in the former Yugoslavia because he wants to help keep the peace.

"Why is that so important to you?" McKinney asked.

"Because they are people, too," the soldier said. "I'll stay as long as I need to stay to give them peace."

Although he visited most of the task force units, he said he regretfully missed a few, including 1st Armored Division Support Command, 16th Engineer Battalion and the 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.

Spc. Craig Pickett, 350th MPAD, contributed to this report.

Inspector applauds task force living conditions

By KARL WEISEL
The Hessen Herald

HANAU, Germany — A U.S. Army official from Germany recently gave kudos to soldiers deployed to the Balkans in support of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR.

"Everyone back here should be proud of their family members who are deployed," said Dan Possumato, 104th Area Support Group executive officer, who recently returned from a 17-day research tour of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"My overall impression was great admiration for the troops. The day-in, day-out regimen they are under is extremely

demanding," he said.

"I was also impressed with morale, it's quite high. Despite seven-day-a-week operations, these soldiers are executing wonderfully," Possumato added.

Getting a firsthand impression of conditions was vital for the 104th ASG commander's right-hand man to evaluate base camp operations.

The former instructor at the Army Management College Staff College, Fort Belvoir, Va., will provide research material to be used for a new chapter of FM 100-22.

Having visited 20 IFOR base camps, Possumato got a chance to talk to soldiers and see for himself under what liv-

ing conditions they are carrying out the peace enforcement mission in the Balkans.

"Despite the demands, I heard very little whining," he said. "The main thing soldiers don't like is separation from their families."

"Many of the troops I talked to wanted to know how things are going back home (in Germany)."

"Several passed on items to take back to their spouses. I've turned into a little bit of a mailman."

Many soldiers expressed appreciation for the support their families are receiving in Germany during the deployment, Possumato said.

Viper refuelers keep helicopters airborne

By **Sgt. JACK SIEMIENIEC**
350th MPAD

There's no cleaning windshields and no checking oil, but make no mistake, this is a gas station. And a high-speed one at that, pumping as many as 10,000 gallons of fuel a day.

It's the Viper Forward Arming and Refueling Point on the Eagle Base Airfield flight line.

Operated by soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7th Battalion, 227th Aviation, this FARP specializes in hot refueling of rotary-wing aircraft.

"Our mission is to support all aircraft flying into and out of Tuzla Main for fuel," said Staff Sgt. Byron Jones, FARP noncommissioned officer in charge.

Byron, a Beaumont, Texas, native, explained that aircraft leave their engines running during hot refueling.

This means the pilots can refuel and be up and flying again without losing much time. He said

the whole thing should take about five minutes at the most.

In addition to hot refueling, the FARP also does cold refueling along the flight line, bulk delivery and defueling, or draining fuel tanks of aircraft that are headed for maintenance.

It makes for long days and nights, as the two, four-person shifts man the FARP point 18 to 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Starting from their home base in Hanau, Germany, their itinerary followed the need for aircraft covering the advance of

Task Force Eagle.

First moving into Hungary in December, later setting up in Zupanja, Croatia, for a month in January and now in Tuzla since mid-February, these soldiers are there when aircraft need to quickly refuel and be gone again.

They will soon shift back to Slavonski Brod, while another unit will replace them.

For Spc. Diego Lopez of New York City, the whole experience has been a revelation.

"At the beginning I didn't like (Bosnia)," he said. "It didn't make much sense. But after we got down here and saw the people, it made me feel good that I'm doing something good for the country."

All of the soldiers are petroleum supply specialists or sergeants.

With their special

equipment and expertise, the Viper FARP services 25 to 40 aircraft a day.

As helicopters of all types — Black Hawks, Chinooks, Kiowa Warriors, Apaches and others, including foreign aircraft — land and take off, the team is in almost constant motion, either refueling, topping off their tanker trucks to be ready or heading the trucks back for refilling.

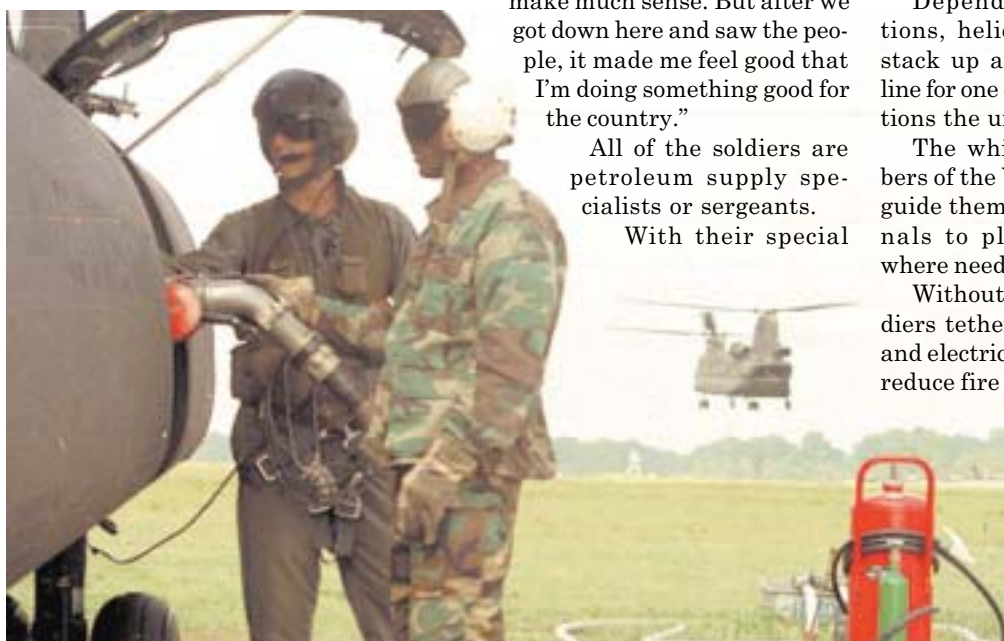
They also move one of their HEMTT refuelers down the flight line to cold refuel the Army's C-12 fixed-wing aircraft.

Depending on air operations, helicopters sometimes stack up and have to wait in line for one of the two filling stations the unit maintains.

The white-helmeted members of the Viper FARP ground guide them in, using hand signals to place them exactly where needed.

Without hesitation, the soldiers tether the aircraft down and electrically ground them to reduce fire risk.

Within minutes, aircraft fuel tanks are full, hoses are uncoupled, the ground guide's hands are up and with a salute, helicopters are back on their mission.



Sgt. Jack Siemieniec

Sgt. Kenneth Peagler (right) fuels a Black Hawk helicopter at Eagle Base.

Swedish medic guest stars at 212th MASH

By **Sgt. ANDREW AQUINO**
350th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK — It seemed like an ordinary day for Sgt. Michael Henrikson, combat medic for Company A, a Swedish infantry unit with Task Force Eagle's Nord-Pol Brigade.

He was on his way to the 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital here to deliver a patient.

After speaking to some of the staff and taking a look around, he liked it so much, he decided to stay for a few days.

"There was not much to do in our area," Henrikson said.

He welcomed a change of scenery and the chance to do something different.

"It turns out we started a sort of medic exchange program," Henrikson said.

U.S. medics would in turn spend up to three days working at Swedish medical facilities.

The program is called Medical Proficien-

cy Training, said Maj. Dan Kennedy, the 212th MASH Emergency Room's head nurse.

The soldiers participating in this project have to be top notch, Kennedy said.

Henrikson worked with patients and practiced inserting intravenous needles.

"It's interesting to see how the U.S. MASH works," he said. "The equipment is not the same as what we use, so I was able to learn something new."

Kennedy said Henrikson was well prepared for the tasks at hand.

"I'd like to be working more with trauma patients and with the Emergency Medical Treatment technicians," Henrikson said. "There's more of a challenge."

The 27-year-old enjoyed his time at the 212th MASH, especially the facility's creature comforts.

"It's very nice here," Henrikson said, "Americans have much more rear logistics backup and support. Your people even have contractors who do much of the work."



Sgt. Andrew Aquino

Sgt. Michael Henrikson administers an I.V. to Sgt. Floyd Heims.

PERSONALITY OF THE WEEK

Aviator to appear on Discovery Channel



Spc. George Roache

Chief Warrant Officer Shawn J. Hoban is an expert on AH-64 Apache helicopter technology.

By Spc. GEORGE ROACHE
29th MPAD

COMANCHE BASE — As a standardization instructor pilot with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation, Chief Warrant Officer Shawn J. Hoban often explains the AH-64 Apache helicopter's weapons technology.

He trains and evaluates instructor pilots to ensure crew members perform the same whether they are flying out of

Korea, Fort Campbell, Ky., or Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But the presentation the 37-year-old Orleans, Mass., native gave in early June could land him on cable television's Discovery Channel this fall.

A three-man crew from documentary maker Video Ordnance visited Comanche Base while in Europe collecting information on how weapons technology is being applied.

They captured video footage of Company C's Apaches return-

ing from gunnery in formation, landing at the Comanche Base flight line.

And they interviewed the normally publicity-shy Hoban on the aircraft's weapons, sighting systems and ammunition loads.

"It's kind of an honor to represent the unit," Hoban said. "When that show airs and they say 'the Apaches of 2-227th,' they're actually talking about several hundred people working a lot harder than many people know, but mine is the only face they will see."

"It really ought to be the other way around," he said.

The independent New York-based firm does "Firepower 2000," a series that examines technology issues in a post-Cold War environment, said producer Dodge Billingsley.

"There is a debate in different circles about how useful these weapons are in a peace enforcement mission — how they are used and adapted in a security environment," he said.

Billingsley has already produced 40 half-hour episodes that have been broadcast, many of them featuring technology used during the Gulf War.

His team, that included a cameraman and sound man, shot 30 half-hour tapes over nine days visiting Aviano, Italy; Camp McGovern, Kime Base and Comanche Base, among other locales, in search of air, land and sea combat weapons.

"Apaches with their guns and rockets look exciting by themselves," Billingsley said. "We wanted to see the real application of weaponry, not something just sitting down at Fort Hood (Texas)."

"We didn't just want a weapons catalogue approach," he said.

On the day they visited, production crew members got to see a "pretty real-life view of what goes on out here," Hoban said.

"One-hundred degree heat, mechanics coming down the flight line handling equipment and parts, birds coming in and going out, mechanics in the clamshell, pilots briefing and debriefing — not a thing that they saw was staged," he said.

The segment including Apaches will most likely air in October, Billingsley said.

Portions may also appear on The Learning Channel series on flying machines the second or third quarter of 1997, he said.

Engineer brigade troops recon destroyed bridge

Spc. WENDY M. FIRESTONE
203rd MPAD

ROUTE GEORGIA — Soldiers from the Task Force Eagle Engineer Brigade recently conducted a reconnaissance of an access bridge destroyed by an explosion.

The destroyed bridge, located near the Republika Srpska town of Priboj, spanned a small stream and connected Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Muslim areas around the town of Teocak. It lies along the zone of separation in the Russian Brigade sector.

Key personnel from the bridge reconnaissance team included a combat engineer, a bridge specialist, two representatives from the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion and two 20th Ordnance Detachment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) technicians.

Immediately after arriving on site, the EOD specialists checked the area for unexploded ordnance.

One of the first orders of business was to determine the amount of explosives used to destroy the bridge.

They found no fragmentation from ordnance, but did find several pieces of charred

plastic they thought may have indicated some type of field expedient explosive might have been used.

Destruction of the bridge limits freedom of movement for the residents of several small Bosnian Muslim villages.

However, a secondary road provides both access and egress and runs adjacent to the Russian Engineer Company headquarters.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert Negrich Jr., Task Force Eagle Engineer Brigade bridge specialist, was one soldier on site to access the damage to the bridge and whether IFOR will help rebuild the structure.

"It all depends if freedom of movement is restricted," Negrich said. "This particular site does not (restrict movement)."

The initial investigation did not yield the guilty party for the blast and no one has claimed responsibility.

Those questioned about the incident also said they were fine and remained happy that peace between the former warring factions was still intact.

IFOR officials have not made the decision on whether to assist in the replacement of the damaged bridge.



Spc. Wendy M. Firestone

Technicians from the 20th Ordnance Detachment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) string detonation cord across the damaged bridge.

AOL

from page 1

"They were the rowdiest, most sober, hardest body-surfing, loudest, best crowd we've ever played for," Wilson said.

Since his typing wasn't up to par, he was assisted by Sgt. 1st Class Bettina E. Tilson, 38, from Harrisonburg, Va., and a member of the 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. She typed Wilson's answers as fast as he could speak them.

"It was exciting serving as Robin Wilson's medium to AOL," Tilson said. "He had a wry sense of humor, but seemed to tire of the same old questions. One person asked him 'How was your band formed?' and he said simply, 'Out of mud and clay.'"

Wilson was linked to AOL with the help of 1st Lt. Lindsey A. Lack, Task Force Eagle headquarters network manager. "I've seen a lot of live chats before so it was interesting to actually see them do the interview in real life," Lack said.

"I'm fascinated by all of this," said Wilson of his online adventure from Bosnia. "I personally try to stay away from computers," he said with a laugh. "I'll only get one when I get sick of jet skis."

Perry

from page 1

"Macedonia and then this?" asked Perry. "Your guys did a great job. How about I give you a Secretary of Defense coin?"

Perry handed out several coins and posed for numerous pictures during his one-day visit, his third to Task Force Eagle since January.

"Maj. Gen. (William L.) Nash and I walked across the bridge that had just been completed connecting Bosnia with Croatia. Our forces were still deploying and the camp at Tuzla was mostly mud and snow," Perry said.

"In April, I visited again and by that time, Eagle Base had been firmly established and there were decent living conditions for soldiers.

"Now, in this visit, I'm able to review all the major elements, all the major missions set in the Dayton Agreement have been completed. As a result, today, as we celebrate our independence, we can also celebrate six months of peace in Bosnia."

Perry was also quick to point out that much work remains.

"In particular," he said, "I believe the next few months — between now and the elections — will be a very difficult time for IFOR."

NATO's mandate in Bosnia wraps up Dec. 19, but defense ministers from the 16 NATO nations are expected to meet Sept. 25 in Norway to decide whether to extend the mission.

"IFOR will be finished in a year," said NATO Secretary Javier Solana. "Whatever happens after that will be a different operation."

"Whatever the decision, I believe that the U.S. will actively participate in the decision NATO takes concerning the future of Bosnia security," Perry said. "That, however, does not presuppose any extension of the IFOR mission."

The political sensitivities of IFOR and the promises politicians have made need to be worked out, and new authorization by the United States and its allies would need to be secured, he said.

Perry said that even as the Peace Agreement set conditions for peace, there were doubts about the success of IFOR's mission.

"Many people were predicting that IFOR would never succeed and that our forces would meet armed resistance when we came into Bosnia — that we would never get cooperation from the three different warring factions and we were just involving ourselves in a war," he said.

"Our soldiers proved them wrong," Perry said.

— Sgt. Kelly C. Fischer, 358th MPAD, contributed to this report.



Spc. Glenn W. Suggs

Soldiers with the 501st Military Police Company stand their ground against an angry Bosnian Serb crowd near a weapons storage site at Han Pijesak. The MPs' discipline helped defuse the potentially dangerous confrontation.

MPs defuse angry civilian mob

By Spc. AARON REED
100th MPAD

Second Brigade Combat Team Military Police proved their mettle and professionalism July 6 when confronted by an angry mob near the headquarters of Gen. Ratko Mladic, leader of the Bosnian Serb Army, close to Han Pijesak.

As many as 500 civilians surrounded 19 members of 5th Platoon, 501st Military Police Company. They were providing security for Col. John R.S. Batiste, 2nd Brigade commander, and members of his staff trying to enforce the Peace Agreement.

The crowd was fueled by false reports that U.S. troops had killed two Bosnian Serb soldiers and taken Mladic prisoner.

In fact, Batiste was meeting with officials in conjunction with an inspection of a Bosnian Serb heavy-weapons storage site.

During the 20-minute confrontation, the

mob kicked, punched, slapped and spat on the U.S. soldiers, who refused to back down or be drawn into a melee.

Cpl. Rick Gilchrist told The Stars and Stripes that he was hit by "a bizillion, 8 million rocks" and a flagpole.

Other MPs kept a close watch on the mob.

"The men kept a potentially volatile situation from exploding by using their restraint and mind set," said Staff Sgt. Kenton Lewis, platoon sergeant.

Lewis, a veteran of Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, added that he was frightened, but felt the soldiers stood their ground long enough to let the civilians know "we were not going to duck our tail and run."

"The discipline and professionalism of the MPs was critical in diffusing a potentially deadly encounter," said Maj. Daniel L. Zajac, 2nd Brigade operations officer and a member of Batiste's team.